

Introduced by Senator De León

February 14, 2013

An act to add Section 69431.7 to the Education Code, relating to student financial aid, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 285, as introduced, De León. Student financial aid: Cal Grant Program.

Existing law, the Ortiz-Pacheco-Poochigian-Vasconcellos Cal Grant Program (Cal Grant Program), establishes the Cal Grant A and B Entitlement Awards, the California Community College Transfer Cal Grant Entitlement Awards, the Competitive Cal Grant A and B Awards, the Cal Grant C Awards, and the Cal Grant T Awards under the administration of the Student Aid Commission, and establishes eligibility requirements for awards under these programs for participating students attending qualifying institutions. Under the Cal Grant B Entitlement Program, awards may be made for access costs, defined as living expenses and expenses for transportation, supplies, and books, in an amount not to exceed \$1,551 annually, as adjusted in the annual Budget Act.

This bill would appropriate, without regard to fiscal years, an amount certified by the Student Aid Commission as available for expenditure from the College Access Tax Credit Fund to the commission for distribution to students to supplement Cal Grant B access cost awards to bring those students' total annual awards for access costs to not more than \$5,000.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) In addressing California's fiscal crisis, state budget solutions
4 over the last several fiscal years have included deep cuts and
5 payment deferrals that have resulted in the loss of billions of dollars
6 in funding for all segments of postsecondary education.

7 (b) In the 2011–12 fiscal year, the state contributed \$16.4 billion
8 to postsecondary education. However, the share of expenditures
9 borne by California State University students in the form of fees
10 has nearly doubled, from 18 percent in 2007–08, to 30 percent in
11 2011–12. A public postsecondary education has become
12 unaffordable for the middle class. Most students are leaving school
13 thousands of dollars in debt, and they end up sending monthly
14 payments to out-of-state banks rather than contributing to the local
15 economy.

16 (c) With less access to postsecondary education due to courses
17 being cut, each year students are taking longer and longer to
18 graduate. It now takes the average student seven years to graduate
19 from a California Community College campus, six and one-half
20 years to graduate from a California State University campus, and
21 four and one-half years to graduate from a University of California
22 campus.

23 (d) Educational attainment levels predict the overall economic
24 performance of states and nations. California was always among
25 the top states in degree-completion rates, but it now ranks among
26 the bottom 10 states.

27 (e) By 2018, 63 percent of all jobs in the United States will
28 require some form of postsecondary education or training,
29 according to estimates by the Georgetown University Center on
30 Education and the Workforce. The United States is on track to
31 deliver only a fraction of this education. Currently, only 38 percent
32 of America's young adults have a college degree, compared to 58
33 percent in South Korea.

34 (f) California's postsecondary education system has helped
35 build and sustain an entrepreneurial spirit that has shaped new
36 sectors of the state's economy. During tough times like these, we
37 need novel approaches to steer the state back on track.

1 (g) Estimates show that the College Access Tax Credit Fund
2 will be fully subscribed for each of the three years of the program,
3 allowing the California Student Aid Commission to fund larger
4 access grants to California's neediest students.

5 (h) All Californians deserve access to an affordable
6 postsecondary education.

7 SEC. 2. Section 69431.7 is added to the Education Code, to
8 read:

9 69431.7. (a) As used in this section, "fund" means the College
10 Access Tax Credit Fund created by Section 17053.86 of the
11 Revenue and Taxation Code.

12 (b) Any moneys that may be appropriated from the fund for
13 purposes of this section shall be in addition to, and are intended
14 to supplement, other moneys appropriated for the Cal Grant
15 Program. Upon the creation of the fund, and during its existence,
16 the amount of the Cal Grant B access award as established in the
17 annual Budget Act shall not be adjusted below the amount set forth
18 in the Budget Act of 2012.

19 (c) On April 1, 2015, and on April 1 annually thereafter, the
20 commission shall certify the amount of moneys available for
21 distribution from the fund for the academic year commencing the
22 following July 1. The amount available for distribution in any
23 academic year shall not exceed 85 percent of the certified fund
24 balance. Notwithstanding any other law, the commission shall
25 thereafter determine the amount of the supplemental awards to be
26 granted. The amount certified by the commission under this
27 subdivision is hereby appropriated to the commission, without
28 regard to fiscal years, for the purpose of making awards to students
29 in accordance with this section.

30 (d) If, after making supplemental awards pursuant to subdivision
31 (e), moneys remain in the fund, those moneys shall remain in the
32 fund for allocation in future fiscal years.

33 (e) Disbursements shall be made under this section to
34 supplement awards made for access costs under Article 3
35 (commencing with Section 69435), Article 4 (commencing with
36 Section 69436), and Article 5 (commencing with Section 69437).
37 The amount of the supplemental award, when added to the amount
38 of the award made for access costs established by the annual
39 Budget Act, shall not exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). An
40 award under this section is payable only to the extent that moneys

1 are available from the fund. The commission shall inform each
2 recipient of an award under this section that the award is for one
3 academic year only, is not an entitlement, and that future
4 supplemental awards are subject to the availability of moneys in
5 the fund.

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